

, INTRODUCTION

hitherto independent khanates of Khiva and Bukhara. As a result the Turkoman steppe—an Iranian domain—was encircled on three sides by Russian forces. In 1881, after valorous defense, the Turkoman tribes were subdued by the Russians at the famous desert stronghold of Geok Tepe. The same year a Russo-Iranian agreement fixed the Atrek River as a boundary between the two countries. Russia now bordered directly on the ethnic territory of Iran and gained access to mountain passes leading to the northeastern province of Khorasan. Russian conquest of the Queen of the Cities—Merv oasis—in 1884 completed her expansion in the Transcaspian region and put her in a commanding position as regards the strategic routes to India.

In the meantime Britain was clearly on the defensive. Protection of India was the main objective of her policy. The meteorlike appearance of Napoleon and his threat to India dictated emergency measures to keep Iran out of his grasp. In 1800 Captain Malcolm arrived in Iran in the midst of a tense atmosphere caused by Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt. The agreements he concluded with Iran, were soon, however, overshadowed by a stronger French diplomacy. The eclipse of French influence in 1809 promptly brought another British mission to Teheran that in the same year concluded the Preliminary Treaty of Alliance with the Shah. This "Jones Treaty" was drafted as an anti-French instrument, but with an eye to a more formidable danger—that of Russia. It was followed by the Treaty of Teheran in 1814. The latter provided for British subsidy and military help to Iran in case of aggression and, according to an acute Eng-

lish observer, fulfilled the maxim that "the enemy of Russia is the natural ally of Persia." In return Iran promised to resist the passage of any foreign troops toward India. The effects of this treaty were largely nullified by a new Russo-Iranian war and the above-mentioned Treaty of Turkomanchai of 1828. Britain's influence shrank, and at one time she was even obliged to have recourse to arms to protect her approaches to India. This happened in 1856 when Iran, following Russian instigation, attacked Britain's ally Afghanistan in order to seize the strategic fortress of Herat. The British considered it a *casus belli* and declared war on Iran. Their troops landed on the coast of the Persian Gulf and compelled the